

Maria is my best friend in the entire world, so whom else would I pick to go with me to Cathy's Coiffures to witness my first professional haircut? For each of my twelve years, my mother has insisted that I get my hair cut by her cousin Madeline. Even though Madeline calls herself a stylist, she actually had only attended beauty school for about three weeks. She practices a lot by dyeing her own hair about twice a week. As a result of her experiments, her hair has the texture of steel wool. Every time I am due for a cut, my mother and I have an enormous argument.

"I'm sure Madeline can make your hair look like the girl's in the picture," she said, referring to the picture I had torn out of a fashion magazine. It featured a gorgeous model with soft, blond waves of hair blowing about her face.

"She can't even cut my bangs straight! How do you expect her to be able to give me this cut and perm?"

Finally my mother agreed to let me spend my birthday money at a salon. I could only afford Cathy's. All the grandmothers go there to have their hair "blued." It was better than Madeline's was, though. Maria was excited to come along. She, too, had worn bangs and a pony tail her entire life.

We waited in the lobby for about twenty minutes, reading women's magazines and painting our nails with the sample bottles. Finally, my hairstylist appeared. She introduced herself as Francine and took us back to the shampoo chairs. Francine had hair that looked like white cotton candy, and I remember thinking she looked a little like Madeline.

I showed Francine the picture and told her how I wanted my hair styled. She began to trim my hair, and I began to notice large chunks of hair falling to the floor.

"You're only going to cut a little off, right?" I asked nervously. Maria had a horrible look on her face.

"I know what I'm doing, honey," she said with a little impatience in her voice.

After sitting for over an hour with the awful-smelling permanent chemicals on my hair, I was eager to see the results. I watched as she blew my hair dry. Boy, was it curly! I figured it would calm down once it dried completely, but it didn't! I looked like a French poodle! It was terrible! I had paid \$35 to look like I'd been electrocuted.

I just wanted to get home and try to wash the chemicals out before anyone saw me. Maria was trying to be nice, but she knew it looked ghastly, too.

It has taken five months for that permanent to grow out of my hair. I'm supposed to go to Madeline's tomorrow for a trim. Maybe I'll grow my hair out instead.

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